

Prabuddha Bharata

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराणिवोधत ।

Katha Upanishad, I, iii, 2

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached:

—Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. XXV]

JULY 1920

[No. 288

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

PART II.—XVIII.

[Place—The Math, Belur. Year—1902.

Subjects—How the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna may be celebrated in a better and more profitable way.—Blessing the disciple, 'When you have come here, you will certainly attain to the supreme knowledge.'—Avatars can in a moment destroy all the bondages of Jiva.—The mercy and grace of a great soul.—Seeing Sri Ramakrishna after his passing away.—About Pavhari Baba and Swamiji.]

To-day is the anniversary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna—the last one that Swamiji saw in mortal body. For in June next he departed from mortal sight. For a few days previous to the celebration, His body has become very unwell. He does not come downstairs, neither can he walk about and his feet have swollen. The doctors have asked him not to talk much.

The disciple, composing an invocatory hymn in memory of Sri Ramakrishna, had it printed. Reaching the Math he went upstairs to visit Swamiji and found him seated on the floor in a half-reclining posture. The disciple coming, touched

his feet with his head and heart and began to rub his feet gently with his hand. Swamiji before starting to read the poem spoke to him: "Do it very gently as the feet have become very tender" and the disciple did likewise.

After reading the poem Swamiji said: "It is well done."

Swamiji's illness has increased so much that the disciple observing it felt like crying and became sorrowful in countenance.

Swamiji understanding the inner feelings of the disciple said: "What are you thinking? This body is born and it will

die. If I have been able to instil a few of my ideas into you, then I shall know that my being born has not been in vain."

Disciple.— Are we fit objects of your mercy? If you without taking my fitness into consideration bless me, then I will consider myself blessed.

Swamiji.— Always remember that renunciation is the root idea. Unless one is initiated into this idea, not even Brahma and the World-Gods have the power to attain Mukti.

Disciple.— It is a matter of no little regret that even hearing this from your mouth almost everyday, I have not been able to realise it. Bless your humble boy that he may realise it in the heart of hearts.

Swamiji.— Renunciation must come, but in the fulness of time. "In the fulness of time one attains to the Atman." When the few *Samskaras* of previous life go, then renunciation sprouts up in the heart.

Swamiji after some time said: "What will you do by going outside and seeing the big concourse of people? Stay with me now. Ask Niranjan to sit at the door so that nobody may trouble me to-day." The disciple informed Swami Niranjanananda of it, when he leaving all work, stood guard at the door.

Then shutting the door, the disciple sat near Swamiji. Thinking that he would be able to serve Swamiji to his heart's content, he felt very happy. Then in the course of service as he began to speak out his mind to Swamiji, so he also began to answer him slowly.

Swamiji.— I think that it will be better if from now the anniversary is celebrated in a different way. The celebration should extend even to four or five days.

On the first day, there will be study and interpretation of Scriptures; on the second, discussion on the Vedanta and solution of problems in connexion with it; on the third day, there will be a question class. On the last day, the celebration will be on the present lines. Of course if the celebration is on the above lines (i. e. extending for four or five days) nobody besides the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna will be able to come on the other days except the last. But that does not matter. It is not that an assemblage of a large promiscuous crowd of people means a great propagation of the message of Sri Ramakrishna.

Disciple.— Sir, it is a beautiful idea of yours. Next time it will be done accordingly. By your will everything will be done.

Swamiji.— Now, my son, you all will carry them out. I have no more inclination for those things.

Disciple.— Sir, this year many parties of religious singers have come.

Hearing the words Swamiji stood up holding the iron railings of the window of his room and looked at the assembled crowd of devotees. After looking for some time he sat down.

Swamiji (addressing the disciple).— You are the actors in the Divine *Lila* of Sri Ramakrishna. After this, what to speak of us, people will take your name also. These hymns which you are writing will afterwards be read by people for the acquirement of love and knowledge. Know that the attainment of the knowledge of the Atman is the highest object of life. By means of devotion to the teachers of the world in the person of *Avataras*, that knowledge sprouts up in the fulness of time.

Disciple.— Sir, shall I attain to such knowledge?

Swamiji.— By the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna you shall attain to Divine love and knowledge. You will not find much happiness in the worldly life.

The disciple said to Swamiji with great entreaty, "You must rescue me and lift me from ignorance in this life."

Swamiji.— Say who can save whom? The Guru can only take away some covering veils. When these veils vanish, then the Atman shines in Its own glory and manifests like the sun.

Disciple.— Then why do I read and hear of "grace and mercy" in the Scriptures?

Swamiji.— Grace means this. He who has realised the Atman, in him a great Shakti plays. Making him the centre and with a certain radius a circle is formed and whoever comes into the circle becomes animated with the ideas of that saint, i. e. they are overwhelmed by his ideas and personality. Thus without much religious practice they inherit the results of his own wonderful spirituality. If you call this a grace, you may call it so.

Disciple.— Is there no other grace or mercy besides this?

Swamiji.— Yes, there is. When the *Avataras* comes then with him are born liberated persons as helpers in the world-play of *Avataras*. Only *Avataras* have the power to dispel the darkness of a hundred lives and give salvation in one life. This means 'grace.' Do you understand?

Disciple.— Yes, Sir. But those who have not been blessed with his sight in person, what is the way for them?

Swamiji.— The way for them—is to call on Him. Calling on Him, many are blessed with His vision—can see Him just

like us with a human form and get His mercy.

Disciple.— Have you been blessed with a vision of Sri Ramakrishna after the fall of his body?

Swamiji.— After the fall of his body I lived in the association of Pavhari Baba of Ghazipur. There was a garden not far distant from the Ashrama of Pavhari Baba where I lived. People used to say it was a haunted garden, but as you know, I am a *Brahma-daitya* and do not have much fear of ghosts. In that garden there were many lemon trees which bore many fruits. At that time I was suffering from diarrhoea and in the villages there could not be got any *Bhiksha* besides coarse bread. Consequently to increase the digestive powers I used to take lemons. Going to Pavhari Baba, I liked him very much and he also loved me. One day I thought that I did not find any means for making this body strong even living with Sri Ramakrishna for so many years. I had heard that Pavhari Baba knew the science of Hatha-yoga. Learning the practices of Hatha-yoga from him, I should practise them to strengthen the body,—this was my idea. As you know, I have a tremendous resolution. Whatever I will set my heart on, I shall carry out. On the night previous to the day on which I resolved to take initiation, I was lying on a cot thinking, and just then I saw the form of Sri Ramakrishna standing on my right side looking steadfastly at me, as if very much grieved. I have dedicated my body and mind to him and his service and I am taking another Guru—thinking of it I was much ashamed and kept looking at him. Thus perhaps two or three hours passed, but then no words escaped from my mouth. Then he disappeared all on a sudden. My

mind became upset seeing Sri Ramakrishna that day, so I postponed the idea of initiation from Pavhari for that day. After a day or two again the idea of initiation from Pavhari Baba arose in the mind—and again in the night there was the appearance of the form of Sri Ramakrishna as on the previous occasion. Thus when continuously for twenty-one days I got the vision of Sri Ramakrishna, I gave up the idea of initiation, thinking that as at every time I resolved on it, I was getting such vision, then no good but harm would come from it.

Disciple.— Sir, have you had any talk with Sri Ramakrishna after the fall of his body?

Swamiji without answering kept silent. After some time he addressed the disciple, saying: "Those who have seen Sri Ramakrishna in body are really blessed. Their family and birth have become purified by it. You will also get his vision. When you have come here, then you are very dear to him. Nobody has been able to understand who came on earth as Sri Ramakrishna. Even his own nearest devotees have got no real clue to it. Only some have got a little inkling of it."¹¹

The conversation was thus going on when Swami Niranjanananda knocked at the door. The disciple rose and enquired, "Who has come?" Swami Niranjanananda said, "Sister Nivedita and some

English ladies."¹² On the disciple speaking so to Swamiji, he asked him to get him his long coat, wearing which and covering his whole body he sat in a decent and civilised way and asked the disciple to open the door. Sister Nivedita and the English ladies entered the room and sat on the floor and enquired about the health of Swamiji. After a few more words they went away. Swamiji said to the disciple, "See, how courteous and considerate they are! If it were a Bengalee, he would have made me talk for half an hour, even finding me unwell."¹³ The disciple shut the door.

It is about half past two now, and there is a great gathering of people on the outside. The whole ground of the Math is packed full with men. Many religious parties were singing and the distribution of sacramental food was going on. Swamiji understanding the disciple's mind, said, "Go once and have a look round—but come back soon."¹⁴ The disciple went out to see the celebration and Swami Niranjanananda sat as before at the door. After ten minutes the disciple returned and spoke about the assembled crowd to Swamiji.

The crowd gradually melted away. About half-past four, all the windows of Swamiji's room were opened, but his body being unwell no one was allowed to interview him.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE Indian idea of Evolution brings to the Western conception of it the completing truth which gives an integral explanation of both sides of the truth of the universe—the Spirit aspect and the matter aspect. Thus interpreted it becomes

a saving truth, humane in its application, and in consonance with the highest spiritual destiny and nobility of man as envisaged the great religions of the world. Viewed in this light, the world instead of being a battle-ground of physical, vital

or mental units, where the progress of one depends on the going under of thousands, becomes a play-ground, where Jivas are recognised as spirits born, using life and body, growing to self-knowledge and unity and therefore pledged to help one another to unfold the Divinity in life, and then to enjoy on the basis of bliss and knowledge of the Infinite the manifestations of the One in the many, the Infinite in finite forms.

The Western conception of evolution stresses the physical aspect and interprets only in physical terms. Its conception of life is that of a material force of which the world is the play-ground, which in the course of its evolution by a collision of forces and suppression of destructible elements, releases late in the series, the phenomena of human life and consciousness. Consciousness is thus regarded as a by-product, an accident of the material universe born of it and eternally subject to it. And as human life and consciousness, thus interpreted is seen to be an adjunct of the material universe and its powers, the natural conclusion is that to preserve the human life and ensure its further advancement, we must exclusively lay hold on matter and manipulate its forces to secure a firm basis for life to extend its powers and possibilities further. From this it follows that the greater the intensity of struggle, the strenuousness of outward living and thinking on the basis of that living, the greater the manifestation of human consciousness and the heights of the ascending greatness of humanity.

The Indian view starts from the opposite scale of values and from another centre of vision. It accepts the material

basis of life, but does not begin from it as the starting point, nor is subject to it in the ultimate result and crown of the flowering of life. By the force of spiritual intuition it saw from the beginning, that all was Brahman, it saw consciousness in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, and that existence was co-existent with consciousness. It saw that if the infinite Buddha-consciousness, of the perfected man, the Buddha, is the crown of one end of the series, it was surely involved in the other. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that every evolution presupposes an involution. Nothing in this world is absolutely unconscious, dull, dead matter, but all is instinct with spirit from which it starts, in which it grows and to which it returns. This spirit-consciousness which is involved in the lowest forms of life, nay, even in what is called inert matter, gradually manifests more and more, as by the play of the light of consciousness, the outer vehicle becomes more and more transparent.

Therefore according to this view the spirit aspect is more important, nay, the primal principle, and the original datum, and matter is only a form and limitation of it in which spirit works and unveils itself. And the whole phenomenon of the evolution viewed integrally in this light becomes but a play of the Infinite Spirit, who apparently severs Himself into diverse parts to enjoy Himself in diverse relations. The many forms and moulds in which the Spirit of the universe clothes Himself do not detract from his infinitude or abridge His freedom and knowledge. Only when the spirit is not seen as underlying the many forms of its manifestation, then the form be-

comes a prison of ignorance and a limitation of bondage. This is the primitive crude stage of evolution in which consciousness is enveloped in the thick covering veils of its manifestation in life and matter—altogether muffled in the inert substances, released a little in the simple feelings of the lower organisms, developed in the complex consciousness of man and expanded in the Infinite, Universal, Unit-Consciousness of the One in the many of the perfected saints.

Thus in evolution there is a spirit-aspect and a matter-aspect, a distinction in degree and not in kind. According to the Indian view, the view of most religions, it is the Spirit which leads and guides, and matter is made only a form of its unfoldment, a support for its workings. Thus the exclusive concentration on the material life and the control of its forces and the subjection of life to it, give place to a calm and understanding law of the gradual and inevitable unfoldment of the spirit through the vehicles of mind and matter. The conscious-spirit of the world has involved itself in the forms of manifestation and of its own will is gradually raising itself in different vehicles, and only the vehicles have to be made fit receptacles for manifestation. The motive power of evolution is the spirit's own momentum and world-energy, not the material laws of struggle and survival of the fittest. These are the by-play of evolutionary forces incidental to the original ignorance of beings, but the spirit will bring everyone to his appointed destiny and real nature, by its own power and play of its own light on the outer vehicles of mind or matter.

This creates a great difference in our view of life and its processes of evolution.

First it is seen that the spirit which is the Infinite consciousness is present in the lowest forms of life; it is not to be created, or produced, by means of life-forces, but is already present and existent; secondly, that the spirit has accepted a garment of forms, and the forms, the vehicles of mind and matter, are to be made more and more transparent to the light of spirit; the material aspect is accepted, as the fact of spirit's involving itself in matter shows that the material vehicles have to be perfected for the working and manifestation of the spirit; thirdly, the way to do it is not the accentuation of material struggle and competition to its highest pitch—which would follow if the spirit were born of matter and were an adjunct of material forces—but an understanding regulation and adjustment of life and its forces which will enable us to raise the powers of life, and to work out its values so as to manifest the spirit which is behind them. Material struggle, life in the world, is reduced to balance and measure, only so much of it is accepted and lived as will help in the manifestation of the spirit, and not an unbounded extension of it for its own sake.

It is in this view of the process of helping in the evolutionary processes that the Indian view differs from the Western. The latter is concentrated on the outer life and its mechanical laws, on the machinery to which the human soul is tied as to a wheel, which always returns to outer life to find its being and truth and live by a control and efficient working of its mechanical laws. The Indian view takes its stand on the spirit, and while accepting the outer life as the form in which the spirit has to work, it has another way of reforming the outer life, i. e.

to manifest the spirit within. It calls down the power and light of the spirit to interpret the outer life and its strivings and laws, which then instead of being taken as a free and unfettered clash, are harmonised and regulated so as to minimise the incidence of destructive energy and help in the opening of spiritual being. Therefore, instead of emphasising the material struggle and the exclusive strenuousness of outward life, the idea is to give a play to life, and to fill it through and through with a spiritual meaning and significance, to change the centre of being from outer to inner life. This is the sense of the spiritual significance of our social order, nay, of the whole scheme of living, and the struggle of life is shifted from without to within. Life is taken as an opportunity to grow in self-knowledge and truth, for only in that light will the outward striving interpret itself rightly, and the forms of life-forces become the proper forms and expressions of spiritual growth and truth.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

(Continued from page 132.)

FROM his boyhood Sj. Narendranath was devoted to Truth. Entering on youth his love of truth in words was markedly increased. He would say, "Knowing it would be a lie I would never frighten little children with the idea of 'the bugbear,' and when I found anybody in the house doing it, I would severely reprimand him. As a result of studying English and visiting frequently the Brahmo Samaj, my love of speaking truth was so much increased."

Born with a strong body, a penetrating intellect, wonderful brain-power and deep purity Narendranath was in youth seen to be always happy and blissful. In physical sports, in learning the art of music, vocal and instrumental, dancing, in harmless jollity and banter with friends, in all matters, he unhesitatingly took part. People judging from the outside and not understanding the reason of his blissful freedom, many times would cast slur on his character. But the noble and spirited mind of Narendranath would not cast a glance at the praise or slander of people. To disprove the unjust slanders of people his proud heart would never stoop.

Sympathy and kindness to the poor was a natural trait of Narendranath all his life. In his boyhood, if any mendicant came to the house and asked for clothes and foodstuffs, he would give them whatever they wanted. The people of his house coming to know of it would severely rebuke him and giving money to the mendicant, get the things back. As this was repeated several times, his mother one day locked him in a room on the first floor of the house. A certain beggar coming to the house at that time and expressing his prayer in a loud voice, the boy heard it and threw to the beggar some valuable cloth of his mother from the window of the locked room.

His mother said: "From his boyhood Narendra had one great fault. If for any reason his anger was roused, he would completely forget himself and break furniture and any other articles in the house which he could lay hands on and make a mess of things. Desiring a son, I made special prayer to the Vireshwar Shiva in Banares. In answer to my prayers perhaps Shiva has sent one of his demons.

Otherwise why should he, when angry, behave so violently like one possessed?" She discovered a nice medicine to calm his anger. When she found she could not silence him in any way, remembering and taking the name of Vireshvar Shiva she poured a can or two of water on his head. That at once calmed the anger of the boy! Sometime after meeting with Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, Narendranath one day told us thus: "Whatever other benefits may, or may not have accrued to me in my quest for religion, I have been able to control anger through the grace of the Lord. Previously, when angry I would altogether lose myself in it and afterwards suffer repentance. Now even if anybody without provocation beats me or does great harm to me, such great anger as would possess me before, does not rise in the heart."

An equal development of the heart and brain is found in rare persons in this world. Those who have it, establish their greatness in some department or other in life. Again in those who leave in the spiritual realm a stamp of their extraordinary genius, is found along with great heart and brain a great development of the power of imagination since their boyhood. Studying the life of Narendranath, we understand the above fact. If we give one instance of that, the reader will understand it.

Narendranath's father was at one time staying at a place called Raipur in the Central Provinces of India, in the interests of his profession. Knowing that he will have to stay for a long time there, he called his family there after some time. The charge of taking the family there was placed on Narendranath. Narendra was then fourteen or fifteen years of age. There was no railway communication in

the Central Provinces of India then, and therefore to reach Raipur one had to pass in bullock-cart for more than a fortnight through thick forests infested with wild animals. Thus although he had to suffer great physical discomfort, Narendranath said that seeing the wonderful beauty of the forest region, he did not at all heed the pain, but his heart was captivated by feeling the infinite Power and Love of the Great Being who unasked decked the earth in such an incomparable garment of beauty. He said, "While passing through the forest what I have seen and felt is deeply engraven on my memory, especially the experience of one day. That day we were passing along the foot of the Vindhya range with its peaks towering high. On two sides of the road stood the mountain-peaks, their heads as it were touching the sky; trees and shrubs and creepers of various kinds laden with fruits and flowers created a wonderful beauty on the mountain sides. Filling the quarters with their melodious sound birds of different colours were flitting about from grove to grove and sometimes descending on the ground in search of food. Observing all these things I felt a wonderful peace within. Proceeding in low and leisurely movement, the bullock-carts came at length to a place where the ranges on the two sides had advanced towards each other and, as it were, embraced the forest path in love. Then looking carefully at the sides of the hill I found that a big crack extended along one side of the hill from the top to the foot and filling that crack, as a result of the age-long effort of the bees, a big hive was hanging! Then filled with wonder to think of the long past and end of the bee-world, the mind was dissolved in the realisation of the Infinite Power and Knowledge of

the Great Being, the Ruler of the cosmos; and I for some time lost all external consciousness. For how long I lay there in the cart in that condition, I do not remember. When consciousness returned I found the cart has proceeded a long distance from the place. As I was alone in the cart, no one could know of it." This was the first experience of Narendranath of ascending to a high level of thought and being immersed in it with the help of imagination.

(To be continued):

STORIES OF SAINTS:

(*Retold by G.*)

III.

THE THREE ROBBERS.

EN the outskirts of an Italian village stood, long ago, a monastery hidden among chestnut and olive trees. Holy monks were living there—disciples of Saint Francis. The guardian in this monastery was Brother Angel, a youth of great sanctity. He had entered the Order not long ago. When he came to Saint Francis and asked to be accepted as one of the Brothers, Francis replied: "My son, you are so young and tender and of noble birth, how shall you be able to endure our poverty and hardships?" To which the youth made answer: "Father, are the Brothers not men even as I? Therefore as they can endure it, so can I, God willing." And Francis much pleased with the answer blessed him, and receiving him in the Order, gave him the name of Brother Angel. And because he behaved so graciously, Francis, soon after, made him guardian in the monastery.

Now, at that time, there were three robbers who greatly disturbed the peaceful life of the peasant folk around, plundering and robbing whosoever they could lay their hands on. These robbers one day came to the monastery. And when Brother Angel answered their call, they demanded of him food to eat. But brother Angel, seeing them, reproved them harshly. "You thieves and murderers," he said, "are you not ashamed to live such an evil life robbing others of the fruit of their labour? And not satisfied with that, now you come to take the alms bestowed on the servants of God? Be off and show yourselves here no more!" At which the robbers departed sorely angered against the Brothers.

Shortly after this occurrence, Saint Francis returned to the monastery carrying with him a basket of bread and a little flask of wine that he and his companion had begged. And Brother Angel related to him what had happened and how he had driven off the robbers. But Francis, hearing this, was sad and he severely reproved Brother Angel: "Why did you behave so cruelly, Brother?" he said. "Sinners may be brought back to God by gentleness; not by harsh words. Did not our Lord Jesus, whom we wish to follow, say that they who are whole need not a physician but they that are sick; and that He was not come to call the righteous; but sinners to repentance? And did not He therefore mingle and eat with them? And now, because you have acted against charity and against the Holy Gospel of Christ; I command you forthwith to run after the robbers taking with you this bread and wine and return not till you have found them. And when you find them, give them the bread and wine and kneel down before them and in humility confess your mistake. And then ask them, in my name, not to continue in a life of sin but to live in righteousness before God. And if they consent to do so, I promise to look after their wants and supply that of which they are in need."

Having spoken these words, Francis kneeled down and beseeched God in prayer to soften the hearts of the robbers, that they might repent and change their evil ways.

And Brother Angel ran in all haste in search of the robbers, and finding them hidden within the forest he said and did as instructed by Saint Francis.

And the robbers accepting the food, ate thereof. And as they ate of the bread and drank of the wine, God's grace descended on these wicked men stirring their hearts unto repentance, and covered with shame, in great confusion, did one speak to Brother Angel: "Brother, greatly do we marvel at the sanctity of the Brothers who conduct themselves in great humility returning good for evil, and contrary to what we deserve the holy Father Francis has sent us, by you, the alms he himself had begged and furthermore makes us such a bounteous promise, We surely stand condemned before God. We beg your forgiveness and we pray of you to recommend us to the holy Father Francis that he may have mercy on us and show us the way to a better life."

And Brother Angel rejoiced and said: "Come then and follow me that you may speak with Saint Francis."

The robbers followed Brother Angel right meekly, and when they came before Saint Francis, they said: "Holy Father, our sins and offences are many, as is well-known to you. But tell us in true earnest, may we still hope for God's mercy? For if so, we wish to do penance and to do whatever you command us to do."

Then Francis, with glad heart, embraced the robbers and took them into the monastery and treated them with great kindness and lovingly pointed out to them the way of repentance, assuring them of God's infinite mercy.

Greatly consoled and inspired by faith the robbers began to do penance. And when they entered the Order they followed in all

things the holy example of the Brothers, fasting when they fasted and praying when they prayed and waking when they kept watch.

Thus were the robbers purified of their sins and in the end they were forever united with their Lord Jesus.

ADVAITIC CONCEPTION OF GOD.

Ineffable Thy glory, O God of Love,
Bed-rock of all Life, in variety aglow, though far
above,
Core of all creeds, though finite faith seeth Thee
not but in her own,
Thou the essence inh'rent in all, in cosmos, atom,
elephant, ant equally shown.

Sanctuary of bliss, happiness within,
When worldliness is weeded out, separateness done,
Life becomes one, the whole world kin,
And Thyself the Transcendent won.

All is instinct in search of Thee,
Thou play'dst the hide and seek,
O Lord from Car'pace of selfhood make us free,
So seeing Thy unity in Life, to Thee we may speak.

In Thy joy, bliss of All-Self let us dwell,
In elysium of Advaita for ever live,
Thus in oneness merged Thy peace and good will
swell,
And freedom, love to all the world give.

One-in-All Sat-Chid-Ananda Tat-Twam-Asi,
Thyself art one though people pray Thee at
Jerusalem, Mecca and Kasi.

MULCHAND DEO MAL.

• EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

CLXXIV.

Almora,
14th June, 1897.

Dear—,

I am wholly in sympathy with the subject-matter of the letter of C— that you have sent me.

In the proposed Address to the Queen-Empress the following points should be noted :

1. That it must be free from exaggeration, in other words, statements to the effect that she is God's regent and so forth, which are so common to us, natives.

2. That all religions having been protected during her reign we have been able to fearlessly preach our Vedantic doctrines both in India and England.

3. Her kindness towards the Indian poor—as, for instance, her inspiring the English to unique acts of charity by contributing herself to the cause of famine-relief.

4. Prayer for her long life and for the continual growth of happiness and prosperity among the people of her dominions.

Have this written in correct English and send it to me at Almora, which I shall sign and send to Simla. Let me know whom it should be addressed to, at Simla.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

P. S. Let S— preserve a copy of the weekly letters that he writes to me from the Math.

V.

XLXXXV.

Almora,
20th June 1897.

Dear—,

Glad to learn that you are better in health than before. Well, it is seldom that dear

Y— reports the bare truths, so do not at all be anxious to hear them. I am all right now, with plenty of muscular strength, and no thirst.....The liver, too, acts well. I am not certain as to what effects S—'s medicine did. So I have stopped using it. I am having plenty of mangoes. I am getting exceptionally adept in riding, and do not feel the least pain or exhaustion even after a run of 20 or 30 miles at a stretch. Milk I have altogether stopped for fear of corpulence.

Yesterday I came to Almora; and would no more go to the garden. Henceforth I am to have three meals a day in the English fashion, as Miss Muller's guest. *

S— writes to say that they are going on with Ruddock's Practice of Medicine or something of that sort. What nonsense do you mean by having such things taught in the class? A set of common apparatus for Physics and another for Chemistry, an ordinary telescope and a microscope—all these can be had for Rupees 150 to 200. S— Babu may give a lecture on practical chemistry once a week, and H— on Physics etc. And buy all the good scientific books that you can have in Bengali, and have them read.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

"THE SERPENT POWER."*

THE "Serpent Power" of Mr. Arthur Avalon is a masterly production of the author and contains a graphic description and explanation of the Kundalini Shakti and the Yoga effected through it and also a faithful translation of two Sanskrit works namely Shatchakranirupana and Paduka Panchaka. He has prefaced the translation by a general introduction and has enriched the volume with several beautiful illustrative plates of the centres (Chakras). The author's endeavour has throughout been to give a rational

* The Serpent Power. By Arthur Avalon, London, Luzac & Co.

presentation of the subject for those specially interested in occultism and mysticism. Thus for a clear apprehension of the recondite matters in the treatise here translated, he has first of all shortly summarised some of the philosophical and religious doctrines which underlie the work and, in a masterly way, has dealt with the concepts of consciousness and unconsciousness and their association in the embodied spirit (Jivatma); next, the kinetic aspect of spirit or Shakti is considered; its creative ideation and manifestation in the evolved macrocosm and in the human body (microcosm) which is a replica on a small scale of the greater world. The intrinsic merit of this volume cannot be appreciated without the knowledge of the contents and as such we give below a succinct resume of the whole :—

"Sarvam Itam Brahma"—quotes the author from the Vedas and goes on to describe the nature of the Brahman which is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute). This supreme consciousness is the Supreme Shiva (Para Shiva). Both Shiva and Shakti are consciousness, the former is the changeless static aspect of consciousness and Shakti is the kinetic active aspect of the same consciousness. The particular power which brings into being the dualistic world is Maya-shakti which establishes a dichotomy in what would otherwise be a unitary experience. The whole world of five elements springs from this Active Consciousness or Shakti. The author identifies the transcendental consciousness with the Supreme Atman—in the first case consciousness is liberated of form, and in the second it is with form.

As man is a microcosm and the world is the macrocosm, there is thus nothing in the manifested universe which is not in the human body. The God is within. In the body there are the Supreme Shiva-shakti who pervades all things and also the Prakriti-shakti with all her products. In fact the body is a vast magazine of power and the chief object of the Tantrika Sadhana is to raise these various forms of power to their full expression. As the centre and root of all powers is Kundalini Shakti, it is the prime object of the Sadhaka to rouse the Kundalini which lies coiled up at the sacral plexus, the lowest point of the vertebral column (Muladbara). Thus there are several centres (Chakras) in the human body,

which are, in the words of Leadbeater "the vortices of etheric matter into which rush from the 'astral' world the sevenfold force of the Logos bringing divine life into the physical body." In other-words the Chakras may be described as "the subtle centres of operation of the Shaktis of the various Tattvas in the body, which constitute the bodily sheaths." There are mainly six such Chakras in the human body, viz., Muladhara, Svadhisthana, Manipur, Anahata, Vishuddha and Ajna. Of the 72,000 Nadis, Idâ on the left, Pingala on the right and the Sushumna in the middle are known as Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati, after the names of the three sacred rivers of India. As Muladhara is the meeting-place of the three rivers it is called the Juklatriveni. Proceeding from the Adhara lotus, they alternate from right to left and left to right thus going round the lotuses until they reach the Ajna Chakra which is called the Muktatriveni.

The Muladhara Chakra of four petals is the centre of the Pritvi Tattva, the Bija of which is "La." Next comes the Svadhisthana Chakra consisting of six petals with water as the Tattva and "Vang" as the Bija of the centre. Above it at the centre of the region of the navel is the lotus Manipura having ten petals with the Tejas Tattva and the red Bija of fire. Next above the navel lotus is the Anahata of ten petals in the region of the heart. This is the centre of the Vayu Tattva and its Bija is "Yang." At the spinal centre of the region at the base of the throat is the Vishuddha Chakra with sixteen petals. Here is the centre of the white circular Akasha Tattva, the Bija of which is "Hang." Progress is next made to the last or Ajna Chakra which, with two petals, is the seat of the subtle Tattvas—Mahat and Prakriti. The former is the Antabkarana with Gunas—namely Buddhi, Chitta, Ahankara and its product Manas. The Pranaya (Om), is its Bija. It is here that the Yogi at the time of his final exit from the stage of this world, places his Prana and enters the supreme primordial Deva (Purana Purusha). Above all is the lotus of a thousand petals known as Sahasrara wherein is the supreme Shiva Himself. Here is, too, the supreme Nirvana Shakti the mother of the three worlds.

From the standpoint of natural dualism, Yoga has been described to be the union of the indi-

dual spirit with God. But if Jiva and Paramatma are really identical there can be no such thing as union. Samadhi consists in the realisation that Jivatma is Paramatma and Yoga means, not this realisation, but the means by which it is attained. Yoga is thus a term for those physical and psychological processes which are used to discover man's inner essence which is the Supreme:

As mind and body are the instruments whereby the ordinary worldly experience is had, Yoga is the method whereby mental intellection and feeling (Chittavritti) and Prana are first controlled and thereby the Sadhaka works towards a positive state of pure consciousness until the identity of Jivatma and Paramatma is realised. This experience is achieved after the absorption (Laya) of Prana and Manas and the cessation of all ideation (Shankalpa). So this form of Sadhana is technically called as Layayoga. There are four forms of Yoga—Mantrayoga, Hathayoga, Layayoga and Rajayoga; each of them has the same eight accessories (Ashtanga) such as Yama, Niyama, Ashana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Layayoga, the subject-matter of this work, is the higher form of Hathayoga, and its object is the rousing and ultimate emergence of the Kundalini Shakti in Purusha when Samadhi is attained. This Kundalini is the individual bodily representative of the great cosmic power which creates and sustains the universe; when this individual Shakti manifesting as the individual consciousness (Jiva) is merged in the consciousness of the Supreme Shiva, the world is for such a Jiva destroyed and liberation is attained.

The author then further alludes to the garland of letters which are distributed throughout the bodily centres on the petals of the lotuses. In each of these lotuses there is also the Seed Mantra (Bija) of the respective Tattvas of the centre as shown above. This Mantra is a power which is thought-movement veiled by and expressed in speech and is identical with the manifested Sabda-Brahma. As Kundalini is both light (Joytirmayi) and Mantra (Mantramayi), the Japa or repetition of Mantra is used in the process of rousing the sleeping "Serpent Power" who lies coiled up in the Muladhara closing with her mouth the entry to the Sushumna—"the door of Brahman." The

main aim of the Sadhaka during his period of Sadhana is to make the Prana enter through this Sushumna, which pierces in succession all the six centres (Chakras) until it attains the Sahasrara where is that subtle "Void" (Shunya), the chief root of liberation. The Sadhaka then becomes Jivanmukta, remaining only so long in the body as is necessary to work out his Prarabdha-karma.

Thus from this brief review of this big volume of 474 pages it will be clearly evident to all that almost all the Vedantic truths in a scientific garb have been embodied in the Tantra Shastras and that this form of Sadhana is equally helpful towards the realisation of the world-consciousness which makes man what he is. This Tantrika form of Sadhana, when judged from the extant treatises, appears to have been, at one time, one of the main keys to open the floodgate of spirituality, though now-a-days it has been the object of criticism and violent condemnation from those who only remember the dark abyss of moral turpitude into which the Tantrika Sadhakas were sunk in the period of degeneration, to the ignorance of the brighter aspect of the same process. They assert that Sankaracharya when destroying atheism, exterminated Shatchakrayoga. But from the standpoint of an impartial historian it can be well established that "Shankara came not to destroy but to reform, and establish bonds of unity between different sects." Even though "Krakacha was absorbed into his God" still the extreme form of Tantrika worship with slight modifications continued to exist under its leader Vatukanatha. A brief review of this form of Sadhana in its essentially pure aspect as given above will disillusionize those who are still so prejudice-bound as not to appreciate the intrinsic worth of this science of religion, the rationale of worship, prayers, forms and ceremonials.

It is indeed a hopeful sign that this Tantrika form of worship in its pristine pure aspect is again attracting the attention of the people, for this kind of Sadhana is none the less useful and valuable a process than other methods towards the realisation of the Supreme. The chief credit lies in the author's remarkable ability to create an enduring interest in this direction by his laborious attention to details, his diligent and patient study

and exposition of the abstruse subject. His present work is undoubtedly a valuable asset to the interpretation of the religious lores of the Hindus and we are perfectly confident that the literate circle will not be lukewarm in according a hearty and sympathetic reception to such a valuable production.

BRAHMACHARI KHAGENDRANATH.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Continued from page 139.)

न प्रत्यग्वद्वायोर्भेदं कदापि प्रदास्यग्योः ।
प्रव्यया यो चिजानाति स जीवन्मुक्तलक्षणः ॥४३६॥

439. He who through his illumination always knows the identity of the Jiva and and Brahman, as well as of Brahman and the universe, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

साधुभिः पूज्यमानेऽस्मिन्पीड्यमानेऽपि कुर्जनैः ।
समभावो भवेद्यस्य स जीवन्मुक्तलक्षणः ॥४४०॥

440. He who feels just the same when his body is either worshipped by the good or tormented by the wicked, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

यज्ञ प्रविष्टा विषयाः परेरिता
नदीप्रवाहा इव वासिराशौ ।
बीवन्ति सन्मात्रतया न चिकिया-
मुत्पादयन्त्येष यतिर्विमुक्तः ॥४४१॥

441. The Sannyasin in whom sense-objects directed by others are engulfed like flowing rivers in the sea, and produce no change, owing to his identity with the Existence Absolute, is indeed liberated.

[Directed by others—i. e. which others thrust upon him. Whatever comes within his knowledge but strengthens his identity with Brahman.

Compare Gita II. 70.]

विद्यात्प्रवृत्तत्वस्य यथापूर्वे न संसृतिः ।
सत्त्वं चेत्त स विद्यात्प्रवृत्तभावो वह्निमुखः ॥४४२॥

442. For one who has realised the Truth of Brahman there is no more transmigration as before: If there is, that man has not realised his identity with Brahman, but is one whose senses are outgoing in their tendency.

[Is one whose senses &c.—is an ordinary sense-bound man.]

प्राचीनवासनावेगादसौ संसरतीति चेत् ।
त, सदेकत्वविज्ञानात्मन्दीभवति वासना ॥४४३॥

443. If it be urged that he is still subject to transmigration through the momentum of his old desires, the reply is—no, for desires get weakened through the realisation of one's identity with Brahman.

अत्यन्तकामुकस्यापि वृत्तिः कुरुष्टति मातरि ।
तथैव प्रवृण्ण शाते पूर्णानन्दे मनीषिणः ॥४४४॥

444. The propensities of even a confirmed libertine are checked in the presence of his mother; just so, when Brahman, the Bliss Absolute, has been realised, the man of realisation has no longer any worldly tendency.

निदिध्यासनशीलस्य वाह्यप्रत्यय ईक्ष्यते ।

ब्रवीति श्रुतिरेतस्य प्रारब्धं फलदर्शनात् ॥४४५॥

445. One who is constantly practising meditation is observed to have external perceptions. The Sutras mention Prārabdha work in the case of such a man, and we can infer this from results actually seen.

[External perceptions—such as satisfying the physical needs or teaching enquirers etc.

Sutras &c.—The reference is to Chhandogya Up. VI. xiv. 2, "The delay in his (i. e. a Jnanin's) case is only so long as his body lasts, after which, he becomes one with Brahman."

Prārabdha work—is the work done in past lives, which has engendered the present body (referred to in Sloka 451). The other two kinds of work are the 'Sanchita' or accumulated (mentioned in Sloka 447) and the 'A'gámi' or forthcoming (mentioned in Sloka 449).

Results &c.—the continuance of the body after realisation, and its experiences during that period can only be explained by assuming that the Prârabdha continues to work. This is further explained in the next Sloka.]

सुखाद्यनुभवो यावत्तावत्प्रारब्धमिष्यते ।

फलादयः कियापूर्वो निष्कियो नहि कुत्रचित् ॥

446. Prârabdha work is acknowledged to persist so long as there is the perception of happiness and the like. Every result is preceded by an action, and nowhere is it seen to accrue independently of action.

अहं ब्रह्मेति विज्ञानात्कल्पकोटिशतार्जितम् ।

सञ्चितं विलयं याति प्रबोधात्स्वप्नकर्मचत् ॥४४७॥

447. Through the realisation that I am the Brahman, all the accumulated actions of a hundred crore of cycles come to nought, like the actions of the dream-state on awakening.

यत्कृते स्वप्नवेलायां पुण्यं वा पापमुल्यणम् ।

सुमोर्थितस्य किन्तस्यात्स्वर्गाय नरकाय वा ॥

448. Can the good actions or dreadful sins that one fancies to do in the dream-state, lead him to heaven or hell after he has awakened from sleep?

स्वप्नसङ्गमुदासीनं परिज्ञाय नभो यथा ।

न शिल्प्यति च यत्किञ्चित्कदाचिद्ग्राविकर्मभिः ॥

449. Realising the Atman which is unattached and indifferent like the sky, the aspirant is never touched in the least by actions yet to be done.

न नभो घटयोगेन सुरागन्धेन लिप्यते ।

तथात्मोपाधियोगेन तद्दर्शनेव लिप्यते ॥४५०॥

450. The sky is not affected by the smell of liquor merely through its connection with the jar; similarly the Atman is not, through Its connection with the limiting adjuncts, affected by the properties thereof.

[The Atman, like the sky, is always unattached,

though the ignorant man superimposes connection with external things on It.]

शानोदयात्पुरारब्धं कर्म तानांशं नश्यति ।

प्रदत्त्वा स्वफलं लक्ष्यमुदिश्योत्सृष्टवाशत् ॥४४८॥

451. The work which has fashioned this body prior to the dawning of Knowledge, is not destroyed by that Knowledge without yielding its fruits, like the arrow shot at an object.

द्याघ्रवुद्ध्या विनिर्मुक्तो वायाः पश्चात् गोमतौ न तिष्ठति द्विनन्त्येव लक्ष्यं वेगेन निर्भरम् ॥४४९॥

452. The arrow which is shot at an object with the idea that it is a tiger, does not, when that object is perceived to be a cow, check itself, but pierces the object with full force.

प्रारब्धं बलवत्तरे खलु विद्वां भोगेन तस्य क्षयः सम्यग्ज्ञानहुताशनेन विलयः प्राक्संचितागानिनाम् । ब्रह्मात्मैक्यमवेक्ष्य तन्मयतया ये सर्वता संस्थितास्तेषां तत् वित्यनहि कवचिदपि ब्रह्मैव ते निर्गुणम् ॥

453. The Prârabdha work is certainly too strong for the man of realisation, and is spent only by the actual experience of its fruit; while the actions previously accumulated and those yet to come are destroyed by the fire of perfect Knowledge. But none of the three at all affects those who realising their identity with Brahman are always living absorbed in that idea. They are verily the transcendent Brahman:

[The Prârabdha.....Knowledge—The argument in the Sutis in support of Prârabdha being binding on even the Jnani (as set forth in the first half of this Sloka as well as in Slokas, 445 and 451-2) is only a re-statement (anuvâda) of the popular view. Strictly speaking, the Jnani himself is not even aware of its existence. The real truth about it is given in the last half of this Sloka and in Sloka 463, and reasons for this view are set forth in Sloka 454 *et seq.* We may add in passing that we have here the boldest pronounce-

ment of the exalted status of a man of realisation, who is affected by nothing whatsoever in creation.]

उपाधितादात्म्यविहीनकेवल-

ब्रह्मात्मनेवात्मनि तिष्ठते मुनेः ।

प्रारब्धसन्दावकथा न युक्ता

स्वप्नार्थसंवन्धकथेव जाग्रतः ॥४५४॥

454. For the sage who lives in his own Self as the Brahman devoid of the identification with the limiting adjuncts—the One without a second, the question of the existence of Prârabdha work is meaningless, like the question of a man who has awokened from sleep having any connection with the objects seen in the dream-state.

नहि प्रवृद्धः प्रतिभासदेहे
देहापयोगिन्यपि च प्रपश्ये ।
करोत्यहन्तं ममतामिदन्तं
किन्तु स्वयं तिष्ठति जागरेण ॥४५५॥

455. The man who has awokened from sleep never has any idea of 'I' or 'mine' with regard to his dream-body and the dream-objects that ministered to that body, but lives quite awake, as his own Self.

न तस्य मिथ्यार्थसमर्थनेच्चा
न संग्रहस्तज्जगतोऽपि दृष्टः ।
तत्रानुवृत्तिर्थदि चेन्मृपार्थे
न निद्र्या मुक्त इतीर्थते भ्रुवम् ॥४५६॥

456. He has no desire to substantiate the unreal objects, nor is seen to maintain that dream-world. If he still clings to those unreal objects, he is emphatically declared to be not yet free from sleep.

तद्वस्त्परे ब्रह्माणि वर्तमानः
सदात्मना तिष्ठति नान्यदीच्छते ।
समृतिर्था स्वप्नविलोकितार्थे
तथा विदः प्राणनमोचनादौ ॥४५७॥

457. Similarly he who is absorbed in Brahman lives identified with the eternal

Atman, and beholds nothing else. As one has a memory of the objects seen in a dream, so the jîvan of realisation has a memory of the everyday actions such as eating and so forth.

कर्मणा निर्मितो देहः प्रारब्धं तस्य कल्प्यताम् ।

नानादेरात्मनो युक्त नैवात्मा कर्मनिर्मितः ॥४५८॥

458. The body has been fashioned by Karma, so one may imagine the Prârabdha with reference to it. But it is not reasonable to attribute the same to Atman, for the Atman is never the outcome of work.

अज्ञो नित्यः शाश्वत इति ब्रूते श्रुतिरमोघवान् ।

तवात्मना तिष्ठतोऽस्य कुतः प्रारब्धकल्पना ॥४५९॥

459. The Sutis, whose words are infallible, declare the Atman to be "birthless, eternal and undecaying." So, to the man who lives identified with That, how can the Prârabdha be attributed?

["Birthless" etc.—The reference is to Katha Up. I. ii. 18.—अज्ञो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुरुषो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरं— "The Atman is birthless, eternal, undecaying, and ever new (ancient), and is not destroyed when the body is destroyed."]

प्रारब्धं सिध्यति तदा यदा देहात्मना स्थितिः ।

देहात्मभावो नैवेष्टः प्रारब्धं त्यज्यतामतः ॥४६०॥

460. The Prârabdha can be maintained only so long as one lives identified with the body. But no one admits that the man of realisation ever identifies himself with the body. Hence the Prârabdha should be rejected in his case.

रारीरस्यापि प्रारब्धकल्पना भ्रान्तिरेव हि ।

अध्यस्तस्य कुतः सत्त्वमसत्यस्य कुतो जनिः ।

अजातस्य कुतो नाशः प्रारब्धमसतः कुतः ॥४६१॥

461. The attributing of Prârabdha to the body even is certainly a delusion. How can something that is superimposed (on another) have any existence, and how

can that which is unreal have a birth?
And how can that which has not been
born at all, die? So how can the Prâ-
rabdha exist for something that is unreal?

[The body being an effect of Maya is unreal,
and it is absurd to speak of Prârabdha as affecting
this *unreal* body.]

(To be continued).

THE PURI FAMINE RELIEF.

The public are well aware of the terrible famine that has broken out in the district of Puri, Orissa. In 1918-19 there was a complete failure of crops in the district owing to excessive drought. The situation was aggravated because some parts of the district were devastated next year by the inundation of the rivers Kishabhadra and Bhârgavi—the two branches of the river Mahanadi. To mitigate the sufferings of the famine-stricken people of the district some relief measures are being taken both by the Government and by some charitable associations. But still there are many places where no help has as yet reached and it has become a pressing necessity to relieve a very large number of persons from the hands of dreadful starvation. In order to afford relief to these people we have already sent workers to the affected parts to open centres there with the small balance left after the closing of our Cyclone relief work last year, being confident that the generous public will come forward promptly with their financial help as on previous occasions. Details of the situation as well as the report of the work will be published as soon as we receive them from our workers. In the meantime we appeal to all generous and kind-hearted people to kindly send their contributions as soon as possible to any of the following addresses and oblige:

(1). The President, Ramkrishna Mission, The Math, P. O. Belur, Howrah. (2) The Secy., R. K. Mission, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged.

Saradananda, Secy., R. K. Mission.

ARISE, AWAKE.

ARISE, awake! Steadfastly tread the path! Swerving neither here nor there surmount the dreams of life. Nor pain, nor pleasure can truly bind, when the soul, conscious of the Self, has touched the borderlands of other things than life.

Know there is that Path which surely leads to freedom, which surely leads the soul through life and death unto the knowledge of its own true Self. For life is only one mood of Being and there are spheres beyond the known.

Vast is the dream, but the Soul is vaster still. And there is eternal freedom when the soul has dropped the dream, contented with its Self, not caring how the dream continues. And this should be, for what are dreams? The stuff which makes them is vanity. The web of dreams is longing and the warp and woof of dreams are pain and self-delusion.

Beyond the dream is the Awakened Self. He needs not dream. Lo, when He awakens, He shall concern Himself with what is not dreams. Lo, and behold when He is arisen, the world shall toll into a vapour and the vapour passes into nothingness. And then the glory of the Awakened One, no longer the Dreamer, shall fill the Vastnesses of Life and Life shall have taken on proportions and extensions, inconceivable on the part of man. The Awakened One shall have passed beyond the limited. The Unlimited He shall have become.

The iron fastnesses of life shall be shattered into a substance lighter, indeed, than the web of the spider; lighter than thought, lighter than what is naught. Life shall have become less than naught when the Awakened One shall have explored the Depths of Him.

Is there ought that the vision of the sun does not include? Even so, and even in a greater way, nothing escapes the vision of the Awakened One, for He has arisen from the sleep of life and entered the substanceless, thought-less, form-less realms.

What can be predicated of the Awakened One? The man of dreams cannot understand. The glories and the greatness of the Great pass beyond his ken, and the soul of the Awakened One escapes his vision.

Unthinkably vast is the Spirit of the Awakened One. No name has He, nor form. Bondage and freedom,—He has passed beyond their meaning, beyond their bondage.

Aye, behold, there shall come upon him who desires the Awakening, a Voice and a Presence which shall rouse him from all dreams. And with the awakening there shall come a great shattering of bonds; there shall

arise the death of all the sensuous sound and sensuous form. The regions where soul is embodied shall pass away from the thought and perception of him who awakens and there shall dawn upon him the Ecstatic Glories of That which lies unspeakably beyond.

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached," the ancient sages sang! Now is thy time, O dreamer. Heed the voice! Hark, heed now! Arise, O Soul, arise, awake!

—F. A.

PRESENT EVILS AND THEIR REMEDY.

JIT is indeed a matter of deep regret that the philosophy of life has become a sealed book to most of us. Spiritualism and the true purpose of life are now out of the scope of our thought and care. We are so much oversaturated with the false doctrine—"enjoyment is our destined end or way"—that "the divinity that is already in man" seems to be repressed out of us. Our mad pursuits after self-interest, worldly fame and sense-enjoyment have created a puzzling maze for us, in the deep quagmire of which we are wallowing for ever. In our mad pursuits after the achievement of vain glories and selfish ends we do not hesitate to elbow out our rivals and to bring them down even by having recourse to mean trickery and dishonesty. But "why all this toil for triumphs of an hour, when the cradle and the tomb, alas! are so near?" We are so much absorbed in our own affairs that the sufferings and wailings of our fellow brothers do not touch our hearts, they do not reach our ears. Our 'things' and our 'egoism' have captivated our hearts and made us thoroughly ego-centric. Day and night we foolishly pursue after the attainment of a drop of unsubstantial and transient pleasure, but the deep perennial fountain of real happiness and deathless joy remains concealed from our views. We are dazed by the illusive splendour of this world, full of tempting objects whose glamour has screened out from us the Mine of all blessings. Our heart has been rendered so callous and the mind so much world-hardened that we fail to perceive His sweet smile in the blooming flowers, His watchful eyes behind the effulgent stars, His beckoning hands behind the gentle breeze and His affectionate voice in the murmuring brook. Our passions and the charming external world have such a strong hold on us that

the occasional gentle shocks coming from His hands are not sufficient for shaking them off.

But why such a degeneration? If we ponder over the question for a moment, the answer is easy at our hand. It is because we have discarded the plain-living and high-thinking lives of our forefathers—it is because we are being nurtured in a different atmosphere. We have lost the high spiritual landmarks of older generations and put our whole heart to materialism and its improvement instead. The lofty spiritualism of our omniscient Rishis does no more attract our attention, it has been thrown into the background and the materialistic religion of the West has usurped its place. We have lost the substance for the shadow. It can be said with much truth that our young men are being crammed with a Soulless literature and a Godless Philosophy. Their young brain is surcharged with dry ideas—the heart realising nothing.

Now the grave question of regeneration, of breaking off the fetters of illusion confronts us. This demands deep thinking on our part. The most important thing to observe in this respect is that we do not follow any ideal and have not the capacity to recognise it even when it is presented before our gaze. "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bhárata, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I body Myself forth;" so says Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita. And true to His promise, a few years back, when the world was being swept away by materialism, He incarnated Himself in the person of Sri Rama-krishna whose illustrious and gifted disciple Swami Vivekananda carried the torch-light of true religion and sowed broadcast the noble teachings of his Guru over the whole world. But blind and enthralled as we are, we could not recognise them. Now, we must know that to proceed along the right track, we should set up such ideals before our mental vision and try to fashion our lives after them.

Then we should learn the secret of work. We are born again and again in this world according to the merit and demerit of our past actions. Nobody can abstain from action, but everyone should work disinterestedly and with the least attachment, and he should dig a grave for his 'self' and tell it to be there. He must ever think that he is not the doer but an instrument in the doer's hand—a chisel in the hand of a carpenter, and hence he must not be proud of his actions and yearn for the fruits thereof, but do his duty for

duty's sake, bearing it in mind that "his business is with the action only, never with its fruits."

Another essential thing is the perusal of our religious books, replete with divine teachings and to try to cultivate true Bhakti (devotional love) in our hearts. Oh, could we love Him as our father, expose our hearts, however impure they may be, to Him and implore His mercy for all our past sins! Alas! we do not know how kind our Father is, how ever ready to take us on His lap. Sri Ramakrishna has said with great assurance, "If you can move but one step towards Him, He will run ten steps towards you." How easy it is to win Him!

To get rid of the worries and shackles of this world, we must have an adamantine faith in His love and mercy, and should at least twice a day meditate on Him with deep devotion and concentration of mind. This will put a curb on our wandering and fickle mind, purify our heart and clean our sight, and then the Divine Lord will be visible on the lotus-throne within, and we shall realise that "I and my Father are one"—that "I am Brahman."

I want to make the suggestion that to guard against our future downfall, the rising generation should be taken adequate care of. It is a pity that our Universities totally ignore the moral side of the students' life. But the Future Hopes of our religion should know that theirs is the time to lay the foundation of future greatness and that it may not be the lot of all to obtain high University degrees, for which they care so much, but it lies in the power of everyone to become a man of ideal character. They should remember that the noble qualities which constitute a truly virtuous life lie dormant within them, and they are only to rouse them up and to manifest them; that the Divine Flame is ever burning in their hearts with its dazzling brilliance, and they are only to take off the screen to be flooded with its wonderful light.

To bring about our final emancipation our women should be properly taught and trained and should not remain steeped in ignorance and superstition. We must change our angle of vision towards them. It is indeed a great sin to look on them only as instruments for the satisfaction of our comforts, and to repress the genial current of their soul. In our advance towards spiritual attain-

ment we should take them along with us; we require their holy inspiration and cannot do without them, because they are the incarnations of "Shakti" and all virtues are lavishly conferred on them as well. If we neglect this resource, we lose a great deal in our endeavour after regeneration. So education, in its true sense, should be imparted to them also.

Now, remembering that the attainment of worldly power and glory, the enjoyment of the senses and the gratification of desires are not the summum bonum of life, and knowing all men as fellow-pilgrims to the same Divine Temple, we must give up all contentions and march towards our goal hand in hand. Then, and then it is, that sin, crime, vice and everything that is foul will disappear from this world and it will become a Paradise, and we shall live as so many children playing in the presence of their parent in his orchard.

KESHAB CHANDRA NAG.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

"When we have run our passions' heat,
Love hither makes its own retreat."

CALM, indifferent to the world, and in meditative commingling with the Supreme Soul, sat Siva, the great benefactor of humanity in his silent retreat of Kailasa. Siva, mad after his beloved Sati was thus calm, the all-crushing wheel of nature had destroyed the lovely Sati, the only nexus between the Mad Saint and the humanity.

Years rolled on; but Siva sat on his tiger-skin under the spreading branches of the sacred Deodar, naked and sublime; no signs of his former sorrow were traceable upon his saintly face; a calmness surpassing death pervaded his whole feature, for he had gone far above life and death, and pleasure and pain in his ecstatic state of tranced absorption—life only pulsating in unison with the Primal Cause of the Universe.

Time rolled on. Umá, the beautiful daughter of the Himalayas, resorted every morning and evening to the peaceful abode of the saint with full-blown flowers of all descriptions in her hands, and worshipped him with them, kissed his feet

and then departed. She had instinctively come to know that he was the Lord to adorn the throne of her heart, and she poured her whole soul in the adoration of her Lord, washing his feet with tears trickling down from her blue, large eyes like the Ganges washing the feet of the Himalayas. But Siva was heedless of her, heedless of everything, for his eyes were closed to the things of the outside world.

But as time glided on, a deep cry of lamentation welled up from the bosom of this entire world; there were sufferings, plagues and pestilence everywhere in the world. Who would cure them, now that the Great Redresser of human evils was lost in deep meditation to the total forgetfulness of the suffering humanity? Intense pathos grew in volume and vibrated through the entire universe, until it ascended the gates of Heaven. The piteous note touched the respondent heart of Indra, the Indian Jupiter, who was immersed in paradisal bliss in his palace of Amarawati. The heavenly King in a trice observed the mournful condition of the world; his face grew darker and darker as he pondered over the piteous state of the subjects of his sublunary region.

But Indra suddenly emerged from his contemplative mood and ordered Madana, the Indian Cupid, to go down to Kailasa and break the ecstasy of the mighty saint Siva. The very idea of breaking the ecstasy of Siva was shocking to him, for he anticipated that the mere glance of his burning Yoga-illumined eyes would reduce him to ashes. The mighty God of Love thus trembled for the first time; yet go he must, this was the command from the mighty King of heaven.

The sun was sinking below the western horizon, casting its departing rays upon the peak of the Himalayas; a sweet, vernal breeze was blowing over the peaceful abode of the great Hermit, Umā was seated there and worshipping her Lord as usual with sweetly-scented flowers and tears were flowing copiously down her ruddy cheeks.

At that opportune hour Madana, the mighty god of Love stood terror-stricken before the presence of Siva with the mortal shaft in his hands. A terrible day for Kāma, a glorious day for humanity! Madana struck the bow and trembled as he let fly the arrow upon the saint. The world trembled;—trembled the universe to its very foundation. The

great Yogi, so long dead to the world, emerged from his deep Samadhi; the locks of his hair quivered in rage upon his head. He opened his eyes with fire darting from them and the next moment Kāma was all ashes on the ground. But behold the triumph of Love,—Umā was locked in the embrace of her Beloved and totally lost in an ecstatic joy shining upon her smiling face!

There is thus behind this symbol a deep under-current of spiritual significance. The moment Kāma, the impersonation of passionate love, was burnt to ashes, Siva fell in love with Umā. It is the triumph of Love spiritual over the so-called passionate love—of the higher Self over the lower. Siva, the perfect Yogi, killed the passionate love and there began the reign of spiritual Love—a love genuine, selfless and pure.

It is a great lesson for humanity to learn in this world of ours. First destroy the fiend of passionate love and then drink deep the nectar of spiritual Love, which transcending all limitations embraces the whole universe in its hold.

ATUL CHANDRA GHOSHAL.

REPORTS.

Ramkrishna Mission Branch Centre, Dacca.

The Twentieth Annual Report of the Ramkrishna Mission Branch Centre, Dacca, has been received for review. This Ramkrishna Mission Branch Centre, located in the biggest city of East Bengal, with its sister institution—the Ramkrishna Math, was established in the year 1899 with the object of worshipping God through man and has, since then, held up before the country the beacon-light of spiritual ideal for the solution of the complex problems of the land. From the beginning till the opening of the Seva department in 1908, it had had only missionary activities. But with the progress of time the workers of the Mission struck out three distinct lines of activity, viz. Missionary, Educational and Charitable. In March, 1916, it was formally recognised and affiliated as a Branch Centre of the Ramkrishna Mission by the Governing Body at Belur and on the 29th May of the same year the Mission was removed to its present permanent abode from the hall of the late Babu Mohini Mohan Das's residence.

I. The spirit of Missionary work undertaken by the Mission is to preach the universal Vedantic truths and to explain them on the basis of harmony of all religions as realised by Sri Ramakrishna Deva and Swami Vivekananda. The weekly sittings for such purposes are held every Saturday evening in the place of its origin and are open to all seekers of religion—sacred songs, hymns, readings from holy books and occasional discourses on religious subjects forming the programme. As in the previous year, the Gita class was held usually in Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Sunday meetings were also held to facilitate the moral and intellectual culture along with the spiritual.

II. With regard to the Educational aspect of the work, the Mission has undertaken to actualize the ideal of education set up by Swami Vivekananda before the country, and to give effect to this noble idea and to bring within the pale of enlightenment all those who are too poor to pay for their education, the Sri Ramakrishna Free School has been started, which had, in the year under review, the lower six classes of the High School standard. 53 students were newly admitted, of whom 47 were Hindus and 6 Mahomedans. Lessons on various subjects were given through the medium of the vernacular—English being the secondary language. There is also a fairly equipped library containing mostly religious books, though books of general interest are not wanting. Monthly stipends were awarded to 10 deserving students during the year.

III. (i) Besides the above two lines of work, the Mission has since its inception been worshipping the Lord by serving the poor, the miserable and the destitute; and for a better working out of this high-souled zeal, an Indoor Hospital was started in August, 1916. During the year under review 34 cases were attended; four of the patients died and the dead bodies were duly cremated or buried by the Mission.

(ii) The total number of patients treated in the Outdoor Charitable Dispensary during the year was 1780. House-to-house relief was also rendered to 63 patients and for the relief of the Aged, the Invalid and the Destitute monthly doles of rice collected as Mushtibhiksha were given to 37 helpless families in the town and to 11 outside the town.

(iii) Another feature of the work developed during the months of March and April last, when small-pox epidemic raged virulently in the town. The workers of the Mission attended the helpless sufferers in their respective houses to the total disregard of personal safety and comfort. The number of such cases attended was 283, only two of the patients succumbed and the rest were cured.

(iv) During the Ashtami-snān and the Janmashtami days the charge of the District Board Camp Hospital for general and contagious diseases was handed over to the workers who acquitted themselves creditably.

(v.) But the last, though not the least, feat of work done by the Mission was the Relief work during the recent calamitous cyclone which wrought a fearful havoc in East Bengal by rendering the people homeless by thousands and by destroying lives without number. The workers of the Mission threw themselves heart and soul to the work of helping the sufferers with money, clothes and food etc. and went in different batches to places under devastation.

(a) In the Dacca town the workers found out 345 deserving persons who were paid Rs 3 to Rs. 10 per head for the reconstruction of their huts, Rs 1828-0-0 was distributed in all.

(b) At Lohajung which presented the most horrible scene of death and desolation after the cyclone, the Mission sent a party of 5 workers to carry the much-needed succour to the sufferers. The party worked there for 5 days and was relieved by a fresh batch of workers who tried their level best to alleviate the distress of the suffering population with money, rice and cloths etc. Besides these the Mission undertook also the relief-work in 7 unions under Thana Srinagar where they worked with every success.

The following abstract cash account will further show the scope of the Mission's undertakings and the heavy expenditure involved in their successful carrying out.

Receipts:—	Rs.	As.	P.
1. For Buildings	1366	12	6
2. " Missionary work	0	0	0
3. " Educational work	141	7	0
4. " Charitable work	594	11	6
5. " General purposes	2664	4	9
Total	4767	3	9

Expenditure :-	Rs.	As.	P.
1. For Buildings	163	10	3
2. " Missionary work	18	10	9
3. " Educational work	655	11	3
4. " Charitable work including, besides medicine and diet for patients etc. (i) Famine Relief work, (ii) Influenza Relief work, (iii) Janmashtami and Langalbanda and small-pox Relief work and (iv) Cyclone Relief work	954	14	3
5. For General purposes	1468	1	9
Total	3266	0	3
4767—3—9			
3266—0—3			

Rs. 1501—3—6 Balance in hand.

Need we more dilate on the usefulness of such an Institution which with its selfless devotees and workers comes forward in moments of dire distress to mitigate the sufferings of the helpless millions and stands forth to-day as a great embodiment of hope for the future regeneration of the country through its silent spiritual activities?

With the expansion of the scope of work and the accession of fresh responsibilities the question of finance has become so pressing that it stands at present in sore need of ungrudging help from the public. Even the ground acquired for the Institution being insufficient, a new plot of land contiguous to the east of the Mission ground ought to be secured immediately and a tank for the use of the Mission should be commenced at once. The Free School should have a separate compound from that of the Hospital, for outdoor games of the students and their training in agriculture. The approximate cost would amount to at least Rs. 15000 and to give effect to this a fund has been started to which the sum of Rs. 1000 has already been contributed and another Rs. 1000 promised. But still a large amount is necessary to bring these to a successful finish. Mr. J. H. Lindsay I. C. S., Additional Magistrate of Dacca, who presided over its Annual General Meeting on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva on the 2nd Feb. 1920, recorded his high sense of appreciation of the many-sided philanthropic activities of the Mission and recommended that it might, besides these, further be interested in maternity

and child welfare. We are confident that the Mission will be equal to all its heavy responsibilities if only pecuniary help the sinews of such noble undertakings—pours forth from the noble-souled public whose "hearts beat with each throb of all the hearts that ache, known and unknown."

The Mission gratefully acknowledges the receipt of all donations and subscriptions and conveys its cordial thanks to such donors and to all sympathisers and supporters of the work for the upkeep of the Institution and advancement of its interests by their kind encouragement and benevolence. Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received by the Secretary, the Ramkrishna Mission Branch Centre, Dacca.

R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal.

We have received the following reports of the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, for the months of April and May, 1920.

For April :-

Indoor patients:—There were 3 old cases, and 8 newly admitted; 8 discharged and 3 are still under treatment.

Outdoor patients:—There were 3081 cases of which 1239 were new and 1842 repeated numbers.

Last month's balance	Rs. 13827	10	6
Total receipts	162	5	0

Total	Rs. 13989	15	6
Total Expenditure	"	1644	6

Balance	"	12345	8
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For May :-

Indoor patients:—There were 3 old cases, and 13 newly admitted; 12 discharged cured, 2 died and 2 are still under treatment.

Outdoor patients:—There were 3770 cases of which 1584 were new and 2186 their repeated numbers.

Last month's balance	Rs. 12345	8	9
Total receipts	366	13	0

Total	"	12712	5
Total Expenses	"	1164	6

Balance	"	11547	15
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Out of the above expenses of the two months the sum of Rs. 2229-6-3 is taken from the Building Fund.

We beg to announce that the work of construc-

tion of four wards for the poor Narayanas who have none to look after them in their afflictions and sufferings, is in progress, though the cost of materials and labour has gone abnormally high at present, for the claims of the poor and helpless sick can by no means be neglected. Another crying need of the Sevashrama is an up-to-date Outdoor Dispensary consisting of six rooms, of which 5 rooms will cost Rs. 1250 each and the cost of the remaining operation room is estimated at Rs. 3000.

The utility of such a dispensary will better be imagined from the fact that the Sevashrama treated more than fifteen thousand sick people with medicines gratis during the last year. As the number of suffering Narayanas has ever been increasing owing to the chronic poverty, famines and epidemics in the country, timely help and the service of the distressed have become a vital necessity which requires the construction of an Outdoor Dispensary without the least possible delay.

Now a great difficulty is experienced in this matter owing to the insufficiency of funds and if pecuniary help be not forthcoming, the construction of this dispensary will consequently be delayed to the great suffering of the distressed and helpless people. We therefore hope that some kind-hearted gentlemen or ladies desirous of perpetuating the memory of their dear relatives will come forward with an offer for the construction of one or more rooms of the dispensary. We have good grounds to believe that this appeal for funds will not fail to have a ready response from the generous public, when the purpose and the serviceableness of the dispensary are taken to consideration.

Contributions may be sent to—

Swami Kalyanananda,
Secy., Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama,
Kankhal, Saharanpur, U. P.

Report of the Shyamala Tal Charitable Dispensary from 1915-1919,

We have received the following Report of the Shyamala Tal Charitable dispensary for five years and have great pleasure to record the immense serviceableness of this dispensary in the hills, where

no such help would be forthcoming from any neighbouring quarters to look to the interests of the suffering population in moments of their due distress and epidemics. We give below an abstract of the total number of cases treated and also the names of the subscribers and donors towards the upkeep of the Dispensary from 1915-19.

Number of patients treated:—

By Allopathic treatment	1609
" Homoeopathic "	520

Total 2129

Receipts:—

Mother	...	...	Rs.	77	15	0
Self	...	...	"	5	15	0
Local contributions	...	...	"	15	6	6
Mr. Jadupati Chatterjee	...	...	"	42	0	0
Gifts by Dr. Kartickchandra						
Bose M. B. of Calcutta, of 4						
boxes of medicines worth ...			"	48	0	0
Gift of Messrs. Butto Kristo						
Paul of Calcutta, of 1 box of						
Allopathic medicines and 1						
packet of Homoeopathic						
medicines worth ...			"	20	0	0
Total receipts "	209	4	6			
Total expenses "	188	6	0			

Balance in hand " 20 14 6

Disbursements:—

Allopathic medicines bought	Rs.	117	10	0
Homoeopathic medicines	"	38	11	0
Medical books	"	2	15	0
Invalid foods	"	2	9	6
Ry. freight, coolie hire, packing etc.	"	26	8	6

Total expenditure Rs. 188 6 0

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted by Swami Virajananda, The Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, Tanakpur P. O., Via-Pilibhit, U. P.

NEWS AND NOTES.

We inform the public with profound regret of the sudden death of Babu Ramakrishna Bose, the son of the late Babu Balaram Bose, the great devotee of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva, from an attack of peritonitis on the 14th May last, in his house at Baghbazar, leaving behind his family and a large circle of friends and admirers to mourn his loss. Noble humility, a candid and

sweet disposition and deep devotion to God, were harmoniously blended in his character, inspite of his being a successor of a large estate. He was one of the great patrons and supporters of the Ramkrishna Order and his broadminded generosity and unstinted charity deserve special mention. We deeply regret the loss of such a sweet personality and pray to the Lord for administering peace and solace to the bereaved family.

SWAMI Paramananda delivered a lecture in a public hall every Sunday morning at Los Angeles during the seven weeks he spent there after closing his season at Boston on the 25th April. The attendance was excellent and every effort was made to keep the Swami longer.

THE record of work at the Vedanta Centre of Boston during the month of April showed a substantial increase in attendance at the services and classes. The Good Friday service was felt to be especially impressive. Following a short instruction there was a series of meditations on the deeper lessons of the crucifixion, the intervals being filled with music.

THE report of the Ramkrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary at Bhubaneswar (Dt. Puri) for May, 1920, shows an increased record of usefulness in the relief of the distressed and diseased people of the locality. The total number of cases treated was 2305, of which 781 were new and 1512, their repeated numbers. The Secretary of the Dispensary begs to acknowledge with thanks the sum of Rs. 10 from Mr. M. P. M. Pillai, Kyaiklat, as donation to the Dispensary.

Dr. Inge chose as his subject "The Idea of Progress," and his lecture, which was at once full of matter for reflection and of brilliant epigram, was a direct challenge to the popular belief in progress "not as a task for humanity but as a law of nature." The Dean pointed out that the idea was, in fact, a growth of the last hundred and fifty years, and he contrasted it with the belief held in antiquity in an ideal age in the past, though some Roman thinkers had believed in progressive improvement, and it was to Lucretius that we owed the word "progress" itself. The deepest thought in antiquity was that "progress and retrogression are only the incoming and outgoing tide in an

unchanging sea." In the Middle Ages there was little talk of progress, and the Church never encouraged the belief that the world is steadily improving. It was only in the 18th century that Western Europe began to dream of a millennium ushered in by Reason, and the 19th century regarded progress as "that kind of improvement which can be measured by statistics."

Dr. Inge proceeded to show how the idea of progress had invaded science, history, philosophy, and religion. Herbert Spencer had allied it strangely with Darwinism, though in fact science afforded no countenance to such a view, and Huxley had promised that it was in direct opposition to the process of evolution. Astronomy denies any notion of continued progress in the cosmic system as a whole. Our planet must come to an end, and the life of the human race "is a brief episode even in the brief life of a planet," nor is it more than an assumption that the domination of the earth by man is a desirable thing.

The historian "is a natural snob," and introducing the notion of progress into political science has evolved the theory that "what is coming must be right." In philosophy "the superstition of progress" has had a profound influence on such different schools as those of Hegel and Comte. In the sphere of religion "the superstition has distorted Christianity almost beyond recognition," and only the Roman Church has withstood it.

If the idea were tested more closely, it would be seen that, physically the race has made no progress for thousands of years, that mentally it could not be claimed that we are the equals of the Athenians or superior to the Romans, and, though moral improvement is difficult to gauge, the evidence of the war would seem to show that we are not more humane or just, or less brutal than the ancients. The accumulated experience of mankind is of great value, but "does not constitute real progress in human nature itself."

But if there is no progress in the macrocosm, there may be "an infinite number of finite purposes" working towards its perfection, and such a belief is not inconsistent with a theory of cosmic cycles. "The distinguishing characteristic of mankind is Hope." Hope was most commonly dismissed in antiquity as a fraud, but Christianity has exalted it to a virtue. It has assumed many forms, especially in eschatological visions, but it is "a solid fact." Our aim is the apprehension of the ideal, and "to live in the knowledge and enjoyment of the absolute values, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty." Thus, for individuals, "the path of progress is always open," and for the race "it is safe to predict that we shall go on hoping."—*The Independent*.

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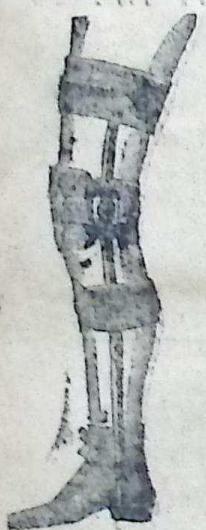
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